

Testimony of Kansas Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free Statewide Committee
Co-Chairperson, Michelle Voth
Kansas Senate Bill 54
Kansas Standing Committee on Federal and State Affairs
February 16, 2011

Dear Committee Members:

The Kansas Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free is a statewide committee coordinated by the Kansas Family Partnership. This statewide group has been in existence since 2000 and is committed to reducing youth alcohol use. Our goals are to educate others about the impact of early alcohol use, to energize the public to address this issue, and to focus the attention of state policy makers on the seriousness of the problem. This written testimony is designed to reveal the social and fiscal costs to the state related to underage drinking. This is **the other side of the story** not considered in the "economic impact" of increasing alcohol outlets in Kansas.

Attached is a "*State of the State Regarding Underage Drinking in Kansas*" that was developed by the Kansas Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free Committee in 2010. Summary points of this document include the following:

- **Underage drinking cost the citizens of Kansas \$727 million.** (This is based on 2007 data and current access to alcohol. These costs include medical care, work loss, pain and suffering, youth violence, traffic crashes, youth injury, youth alcohol treatment, fetal alcohol among mothers age 15-20 and poisonings and psychosis. (See page 4 of State of the State).
- **For every \$100 Kansas government spends on substance abuse and addiction:**
 - \$98.13 is spent on the burden of underage drinking to public programs;
 - \$ 1.55 is spent on prevention, treatment and research;
 - \$ 0.32 is spent on regulation and compliance.
- **Kansas spends only .27 percent of its budget on substance abuse and addiction prevention, treatment and research but spends 17.4% of its total state budget on the burdens of substance abuse and addiction.**

Policies that will reduce youth access to alcohol include:

- Reduced alcohol outlets;
- Reduction of alcohol advertising to youth;
- Age requirements of 21 for selling alcohol – several studies indicate younger employees are more likely to sell to underage youth than older employees. Hiring only persons 21 or older reduces an establishment's potential liability;
- Enforcement of underage drinking laws;
- Banning or restrictions of home deliveries;
- Required trainings for clerks;
- Compliance checks. This will require additional resources from KDOR/Alcoholic Beverage Control.

